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 SUBJECT: EMBASSY ELECTION  
 PREPARED BY: INR/IAA:STATE -- 02/11/96 7-0229  
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
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CLASSIFIED BY: WSEB/2. HOMME, INR/IAA, DEPARTMENT OF  
 STATE. REASON: 1.5(C) (U).

1. (U) THE FOLLOWING INR BRIEFS AND ASSESSMENTS, COMPILED  
 BY INR/IAA, ARE PROVIDED FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND COMMENT.

1. BRIEFS

(U) VENEZUELA: SEMI-INDEPENDENT CANDIDACY

2. (U) IRENE SAEZ, THE FORMER BEAUTY QUEEN AND CURRENT  
 FRONT-RUNNER FOR THIS DECEMBER'S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, WILL  
 ESCHEW VENEZUELA'S TRADITIONAL, BUT WIDELY UNPOPULAR,  
 PARTIES TO FORM A COALITION WITH THE SMALLER, LEFT-OF-  
 CENTER RADICAL CAUSE PARTY (CER), ACCORDING TO EMBASSY  
 CARACAS. THE SAEZ-LCR ALLIANCE ALSO WILL INCLUDE SEVERAL  
 FIGURES FROM THE MOVEMENT TOWARD SOCIALISM PARTY, NOW PART  
 OF PRESIDENT CALDERA'S COALITION, AND SUCH INDEPENDENTS AS

ZULIA GOVERNOR FRANCISCO ARIAS CARDENAS, WHO HELPED LEAD A  
 FEBRUARY 1992 COUP ATTEMPT.

3. (U) COMMENT: SAEZ'S 20-POINT LEAD IN THE POLLS STEMS  
 IN LARGE PART FROM HER REPUTATION AS AN INDEPENDENT,  
 UNBUNDLED BY ASSOCIATION WITH THE COUNTRY'S CORRUPT

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 PARTIES. THE ALLIANCE WITH THE LCR (REGARDED AS LESS  
 CONTENTIBLE THAN OTHER PARTIES) PROBABLY WILL PROMPT AT

LEAST A SMALL DROP IN THE POLLS FOR SAEZ. SHE IS WILLING TO  
 PAY THIS PRICE, HOWEVER, SINCE SHE RECOGNIZES HER NEED FOR  
 A COHERENT POLITICAL ORGANIZATION THAT CAN RAISE MONEY,  
 MOBILIZE VOTERS, AND MONITOR THE LARGER PARTIES' COME  
 ELECTION DAY.  
 DRAFTED BY INR/IAA: 2/10/96

(U) PARAGUAY: THROWING AWAY THE KEY

4. (U) AS MAY TO PARAGUAYAN GENERAL ELECTIONS DRAW  
 CLOSE, RETIRED GENERAL OUTEDO, THE RULING COLOPAGO PARTY'S  
 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE, FIGHTS IMPRISONMENT, WITH CHANCES  
 FOR HIS RELEASE APPARENTLY DIMINISHING.

5. (U) DOING HARD TIME. PRESS REPORTS INDICATE A MILITARY  
 TRIBUNAL WILL SOON CONVINCE OUTEDO FOR INSUBORDINATION AND  
 ARMED RESISTANCE AND SENTENCE HIM TO FIVE YEARS'  
 IMPRISONMENT. BASED ON HIS LEADERSHIP OF AN APRIL 1996 COUP  
 ATTEMPT, THE TRIBUNAL ON FEBRUARY 4 SUGGESTED AN IMPENDING  
 CONVICTION OF CHARGING OUTEDO'S POLITICAL ACTIVATION START  
 TO THAT OF IMPRISONMENT, THOUGH HIS ATTORNEYS CONTINUE TO  
 PURSUE HABEAS CORPUS ATTEMPTS ON OUTEDO'S BEHALF. THE  
 CIVILIAN LEADER'S OUTDOOR APPEARS SUBORDINATION OF THE MILITARY  
 TRIBUNAL.

(U) ARGANA: COUP IN THE PANNET COLOPAGO PARTY  
 PRESIDENT ARGANA, A DETROITER RESIDENT WHO NARROWLY WON  
 THE COLOPAGO PRIMARY, HAS CALLED A SPECIAL PARTY CONVENTION  
 FOR MARCH 3, TWO DAYS BEFORE THE DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION

OF CANDIDATES. USING A PRETEXT THAT MANY BELIEVE CONCEALS  
 ARGANA'S INTENT TO NULLIFY OUTEDO'S CANDIDACY AND PROCLAIM  
 HIMSELF THE COLOPAGO CANDIDATE. ANOTHER OPTION ADVANCED BY  
 ANTI-OUTEDO ELEMENTS CALLS FOR CANCELLATION OF OUTEDO'S  
 PRIMARY VICTORY ON THE SPECIOUS GROUNDS OF VOTER FRAUD, AND  
 THE HOLDING OF A NEW COLOPAGO PRIMARY, RESULTING IN THE  
 DELAY OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. ALL THE CIVILIAN  
 MANEUVERING IS OCCURRING WITH THE THREAT OF MILITARY ACTION  
 IN THE BACKGROUND.

7. (S/NF) WORRIED IN BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINE PRESIDENT  
 MENEM [REDACTED] EXPRESSED HIS CONCERNS ABOUT THE POLITICAL  
 CRISIS [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] MENEM, WHO MET WITH OUTEDO IN BUENOS  
 AIRES SOON AFTER HIS SEPTEMBER 1997 PRIMARY VICTORY.

[REDACTED] UP TO THIS POINT BRAZIL HAS  
 TAKEN A HARDER LINE THAN ARGENTINA IN PUBLICLY CHALLENGING  
 OUTEDO'S DEMOCRATIC CREDENTIALS.  
 DRAFTED BY INR/IAA: 2/7/98

(S/NF) COLOMBIA: SEPFA'S US STRATEGY

8. (S/NF) LEADING COLOMBIAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE  
 MORAGO SEPFA [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] PLANS TO RETAIN POLICE CHIEF SEPFA

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ARA/NEA REARCSPAGE 02 OF 03 STATE 025258 112726Z  
UNTIL THE PATTER'S MANDATORY RETIREMENT IN THREE YEARS.

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REDUCING UNEMPLOYMENT.

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15. (C) TO PLEASURE THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY THAT HE WILL NOT WORSEN THE BUDGET DEFICIT BY SPENDING IMPROVIDENTLY ON SOCIAL PROGRAMS, SERPA RECRUITED SEVERAL HIGHLY RESPECTED BANKERS TO HELP RUN HIS CAMPAIGN. TO DEFINE HIMSELF FROM CHARGES HE IS A DANGEROUS "GUERRILLA SYMPATHIZER," HE IS HAVING A RESPECTED FORMER ARMED FORCES COMMANDER GOVERNMENT LOBBY A SPECIFIC MILITARY, TO SHORE UP HIS COUNTERNARCOTICS CREDENTIALS, HE WORKED WITH DEDICATION TO PERSONAL EXTORTION AND HAS INCLUDED THE SUPPORT FOR ERADICATION AND OTHER US-SPONSORED PROGRAMS.

16. (C) THE COMPETITION. FORMER ARMED FORCES COMMANDER GENERAL MENDOZA IS STORMED IN THE PORTS AND A MERITLESS CRITIC OF SERPA. MENDOZA IS PURSUING AN IMPROVEMENT AND APPEALS TO MANY COLOMBIANS' DESIRE FOR A STRONG LEADER, THOUGH HE HAS THE WEIGHT OF OLD ALLEGATIONS OF TIES TO PARAMILITARY GROUPS. HE ADVOCATES A MILITARY SOLUTION TO THE GUERRILLA PROBLEM AND A CLEAN SWEEP OF NARCOCORRUPTION FROM THE GOVERNMENT.

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ORIGIN BY: ARA/NEA 7/26/92

1. ASSASSINATIONS

10. CONCLUSION: SERPA'S TO LOSE

1. (C) SERPA, FORMER CANDIDATE AND SENATE PROTECTOR MENDOZA SERPA IS STILL THE MAN TO BEAT AS CAMPAIGNING FOR THE MAY 27 ROUND OF COLOMBIA'S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION ON 15 MAY.

12. (C) SERPA, FOR MONTHS THE PRESUMPTIVE NEXT PRESIDENT, HAS CONSISTENTLY PORTED 20-30 PERCENT SUPPORT, MORE THAN ENOUGH TO POSITION HIM AS THE MAN TO BEAT IN JUNE 21 SECOND ROUND BALLOTING. SERPA'S RUNOFF OPPONENT WILL HAVE TO DRAW TOGETHER IDEOLOGICALLY DIVERSE, AND OFTEN ANTAGONISTIC, ANTI-SERPA FORCES TO HAVE ANY CHANCE OF STOPPING HIM, WITH THE COST OF CAMPAIGNS ESCALATING. MONEY IS A WORRY FOR ALL CANDIDATES; THEY ARE SCRUTINIZING CONTRIBUTIONS CAREFULLY TO AVOID THE STIGMA THAT HAS BEDEVILED PRESIDENT SAMPER. SERPA, PRESIDENT SAMPER'S CAMPAIGN MANAGER AND INTERIOR MINISTER, WAS OFFICIALLY EXONERATED IN DECEMBER OF CHARGES HE HELPED COVER UP SAMPER'S 16 MILLION IN NARCOCORRUPTIONS.

13. (C) FORMER POPULIST AND SAVVY POLITICO, SERPA HAS SUPPORT FROM THE LOWER CLASSES AND THE DOMINANT LIBERAL PARTY, WHICH SELECTED HIM AS THE OFFICIAL CANDIDATE AND PARTY PRESIDENT AT A JANUARY 25 CONVENTION. THOUGH LESS IMPORTANT IN THE BIG CITIES, THE PARTY MACHINE WILL BE INVALUABLE IN GETTING OUT THE VOTE IN THE PROVINCES. A SELF-DESCRIBED "CENTER-LEFTIST," SERPA IS A CONSUMMATE CAMPAIGNER. HE WAS PLEDGED TO PURSUE A NEGOTIATED

SETTLEMENT WITH THE GUERRILLAS AND IMPLEMENT A STILL UNDEFINED "DEMOCRATIC AND SOCIAL CONTRACT" THAT WOULD EMPHASIZE SOCIAL PROGRAMS WHILE REDUCING INFLATION AND STOPPING GROWTH.

14. (C) TO REACH BEYOND HIS CORE SUPPORT AND WIN IN THE SECOND ROUND, SERPA KNOWS HE MUST OVERCOME HIS HIGH NEGATIVE RATINGS. THOUGH STILL DEFENDING THE RECORD OF THE SAMPER ADMINISTRATION, HE HAS BEGUN TO CRITICIZE IT HEEDILY FOR SHORTCOMINGS ON NARCOCORRUPTION, PURSUING PEACE, AND

ORIGIN BY: ARA/NEA 7/26/92

UP ZERILLO: THE 7-22 2000 PROBLEM

15. (C) PRESIDENT ZERILLO FACES AN IMPROVISED CHALLENGE TO THE TRADITIONAL RIGHT OF THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT CHIEF EXECUTIVE TO NAME HIS PARTY'S NOMINEE TO SUCCEED HIM. PUERCA GOVERNOR BARTLETT HAS PUT OUT DECLARED HIS CANDIDACY. BARTLETT'S ASCENDANCY REFLECTS REBELLION WITHIN THE INSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTIONARY PARTY (PRI) AGAINST ZERILLO'S EFFORTS TO REFORM THE PARTY AND SLURFAGE IT FROM THE GOVERNMENT.

19. (C) OPEN CAMPAIGNING FOR THE PRI PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION HERETOFORE TABOO TO ELECTION, TRADITIONALLY HAS BEEN TABOO. THOUGH NOPEFULS JOCKEYED FURIOUSLY FOR POSITION BEHIND THE SCENES, THE ACTUAL CHOICE WAS FINALLY UP TO THE INCUMBENT AND EVERYONE OUTLIVELY FEEL

INTO LINE. THIS PROTOCOL WAS BREACHED SLIGHTLY IN 1994 WHEN

MANUEL CAMACHO BOILED THE PRI AFTER FAILING TO GET THE NOMINATION, BUT NOW--TWO YEARS BEFORE THE END OF ZERILLO'S TERM--BARTLETT HAS CAST ASIDE THE UNWRITTEN RULES BY MAKING HIS OPEN (IT STILL OFFICIALLY UNDECLARED) BID.

28. (C) LAMEDUCK ALREADY? BARTLETT'S GAMBIT, MOST RECENTLY IN THE FORM OF AN ENDORSEMENT BY A KEY LABOR CENTRAL, SUGGESTS HE BELIEVES ZERILLO'S AUTHORITY WITHIN THE PARTY IS SO WEAKENED THAT HE CANNOT PUNISH SUCH AN AFFRONT. ZERILLO'S EFFORTS TO REFORM THE ELECTORAL PROCESS AND SEPARATE PARTY FROM STATE HAVE ANGELED PRI-TRADITIONALISTS, WHO HAVE NURSED RESENTMENTS AGAINST THE PARTY'S LONG-DOMINANT TECHNOCRAT WING (WHICH HAS PROVIDED THE LAST THREE PRESIDENTS), IN A CLEAR CHALLENGE TO THE TECHNOCRATS, THE "POLITICOS" IN 1996 IMPOSED NEW PARTY REQUIREMENTS (PADLOCKS) FOR CANDIDATES, INCLUDING LENGTH OF PARTY SERVICE AND PREVIOUS HOLDING OF ELECTIVE OFFICE.

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LAST YEAR'S MIDTERM ELECTIONS CONFIRMED THEIR OPINION OF  
ZEDILLO'S [REDACTED] WHEN THE PARTY WAS TROUNCED  
IN MEXICO CITY AND LOST ITS MAJORITY IN THE LOWER HOUSE OF  
CONGRESS.

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21. (C) DAVE SIDL. BARTLETT WAS THE FRONTRUNNING  
PONTIAC FOR THE 1994 PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION BUT LOST OUT  
TO THE TELLINGER GERLO. SHINES. [REDACTED]

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22. (C) RECENTLY HE ENRAGED THE PAN BY PASSING A BILL

GIVING HIM THE AUTHORITY TO DISTRIBUTE FEDERAL FUNDS TO  
POORER MEXICAN MUNICIPALITIES (CONTROLLED BY THE PAN).  
ILLEGITIMATELY SHUTTING OUT PUERTO RICO AND OTHER URBAN  
MUNICIPALITIES RUN BY THE PAN. THIS MOVE HAS BECOME A NATIONAL  
ISSUE. THE PAN, WHOSE VOTES WERE KEY TO PASSING ZEDILLO'S  
BUDGET, IS CRYING FOU AND THREATENING TO CLOSE ALL  
COOPERATION WITH THE ADMINISTRATION.

23. (C) BARTLETT'S HARDLINE STANCE HAS BOOSTED HIS  
STANDING WITH THE TRADITIONALISTS, WHO FEEL UNRAIDED BY THE  
UNKNOWING ALLEGATIONS OF CORRUPTION (INCLUDING SOME  
REPORTS OF TIES WITH NARCOTRAFFICERS) THAT HAVE TRAILLED  
BARTLETT FOR YEARS. HE HAS BECOME THE MAN TO BEAT FOR THE  
2000 NOMINATION.

[REDACTED]  
UPATED BY ENR:TAG- 2/5/95  
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